

professional and personal life. This balance is, however, constantly changing.

I have become an expert at delayed gratification. With medical and surgical training being what it is, I am used to the planning and the loss of freedom that such a life entails. My husband and I have found that last-minute or inadequate planning in both our professional and personal lives adds to frustration and chaos. We were married 11 years before we even completed our medical training. For my husband, this was medical school, a PhD in medical information sciences, and an internal medicine residency; for me it was medical school and a urology residency. Although we both love animals, we waited nine years after we were married—until my husband finished his residency—to get a dog because we wanted one of us to be home most evenings to play with and care for the dog. We also waited 12 years after we were married before we had our first child. At that time, we thought our schedules could finally have some flexibility and that we could afford the kind of child care that we needed. It was five years after that, when our daughter developed some independence, before we felt that we could handle a second child.

As our lives have changed, so have our needs: we need a lot of help and need to pay for it. In essence we have had to buy back our free time. This has been a difficult realization because we had always done and expected to do many of the chores that we now pay others to do. We also accept that we can do some of these chores better than those we now pay to do them, but we have them done, nevertheless. When we were residents, we recognized that we needed help with housekeeping when neither of us wanted to spend our precious hours off scrubbing toilets and bathtubs. With the birth of our children came the inevitable question of child care. Although we knew from the beginning that our irregular work hours required live-in help, our perceptions of what this person should be and do have changed with experience. After the birth of our first daughter we had a delightful au pair who cared for our child during the day. Although this was a tremendous help, we found that rushing home to cook every evening, with grocery shopping, house cleaning, laundry, and errand running on the weekends, were robbing us of time with our daughter. After nine months we decided that we needed a reliable, careful, mature nanny and housekeeper for all of us, and that we would be willing to pay top wages and benefits to such a person. This has given us time to spend with our children and to do things other than daily chores. In addition, a live-in nanny allows support when one of us is traveling, attending an evening meeting, or called in for medical emergencies. Selecting someone to live with us has also provided us the benefit of getting to know better the personality and values of the person who cares for our children. In the past few years we have added the help of regular housecleaners and gardeners.

We have also “bought” time for ourselves by minimizing errands and household trips. We try to buy several months of clothes at once. Often we buy our Christmas gifts in the summer while on vacation just to prevent the hectic seasonal shopping. We try to plan our shopping so that we do not have to make extra trips to prepare special dinners or find last-minute gifts.

I continue to try to learn new ways of preserving my time for the things that I want to do rather than the things I need to do. This has meant not only setting priorities and goals but

also adjusting them because they are often unmet. Unfortunately, this usually means “robbing Peter to pay Paul” because things are not perfect.

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Managing the Yin and the Yang

EDITOR'S NOTE: Nadine Bruce, MD, is an Assistant Professor of Medicine and Deputy Program Director, Integrated Medical Residency Program, at the University of Hawaii. She redirected her career from private practice to academic medicine ten years ago. She is married to Hans-Jürgen Krock, PhD, who is an Associate Professor and Director of the Oceanographic Research Laboratory at the University of Hawaii.

I HAVE BEEN ASKED to share some key elements that have allowed me success in balancing my professional and personal lives. My success is a delusion, but because I do not know this, I function fairly well.

The chaos of daily life would rapidly impair me if I did not take time to smell the flowers. Using one's senses to appreciate the beauty and wonder of the world takes no additional time, whether it is the sight of an infant's smile or the feel of a hot shower at the end of a long day. I am a classical music and laughter junkie, and I must have daily doses of both.

Personal time is essential and should be scheduled as rigorously as patient appointments. I block out mini-breaks on my daily work schedule for a quick lunch with a friend or a detour to the bookstore on the way to an evening meeting. The most treasured possession in my office is my couch, inherited from the department chair. I have learned to take catnaps without guilt. Putting my feet up and taking my shoes off make the paperwork go faster and more pleasantly. I set aside half a day a week to do something fun for me. An evening a week and weekend breakfasts out are reserved for “dates” with my spouse. Holidays are sacred, and they are used for leisure activities only. Long weekends to the outer islands, sometimes combined with a short continuing medical education course, are taken at least twice a year. Annual vacations—the more exotic, the better—ensure my survival the rest of the year. When I am experiencing mountain sickness in Tibet, it is easy to forget the petty criticisms of my detractors at work, the departmental project six months overdue, or the fact that my bedroom roof continues to leak despite multiple repairs.

Knowing people care about me has gotten me through many rough times both professionally and personally. My spouse is my helpmate in every sense of the word. I could not afford the time or energy required to maintain a relationship if I had just a mate or, worse yet, a hindermate. I have sought out male mentors since the inception of my career. They have helped pave a smoother way for me in this male-dominated profession. I have one intimate friend and one familiar (my cat) to share my joys and sorrows. I actively maintain relationships with family and friends; they are too precious to take for granted. I avoid the mean-spirited.

I have learned to create time. Ten years ago I took a speed-reading course. This skill quarters the time I spend on administrative duties, enhances my studying, and allows me to indulge in pleasure reading to a degree I never considered possible. Weekly and daily “to do” lists both at work and at

home guarantee my completing tasks on a timely basis. Finding ways to do two things at once is a game I play: riding the exercise bike while watching the news on television, reading a paperback novel while waiting in the bank line, restaurant breakfast meetings for business or pleasure. Years ago I discovered mail-order shopping.

It took no time at all to relegate housework to where it belongs on my priority list—off the list. I have made the bed twice in the past decade. Ironing is a word not in my vocabulary. I once made a promise to my spouse that I would cook for him, and I do this faithfully—every Sunday evening. My intense need for privacy keeps me from hiring household help, so I clean the house myself, as infrequently as possible. I have accumulated an arsenal of space-age cleaning tools. Not only am I a speed-reader, I am also a speed-cleaner. My spouse and I divide the absolutely necessary household duties according to who detests doing what less. He does the laundry, vacuums, changes the unmade bed, and attempts household repairs. I feed the cat, water the houseplants, empty the wastebaskets, take out the garbage, wash the dishes every Sunday evening, and mow the lawn. (Actually, I only mow the front lawn, primarily to appease the neighbors; the backyard, spared from the neighborhood view, is our minijungle.) Grocery shopping is done together, our Sunday social event.

Ten years ago I redirected my career because private practice was making me dull. I actually work more hours in academic medicine, but I have more control of those hours. Instead of being on call 24 hours a day every day, I now take call only one week out of seven. I am running my career instead of having it run me.

I rejected the Superwoman Syndrome as soon as I learned of its existence. I never wanted to be Superwoman. It is hard enough just being. My goal is to become Ordinary Woman, at which point my life will function ideally. I do not have to have it all. I do not even want it all. I have learned to say no. I have graciously accepted my deficiencies and failures. I actively strive to become downwardly mobile, and I very much enjoy my “dinky” (double income, no kids) status.

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The Successful Mix

EDITOR'S NOTE: Peggy Fritzsche, MD, is a Professor of Radiology at Loma Linda (California) University Medical Center. She is active in local and national medical organizations and is past president of the medical staff at her hospital. She is married to Anton N. Hasso, MD, a neuroradiologist; they have two grown sons.

THERE ARE SEVERAL FACTORS that have allowed me to successfully mix my personal and professional lives. I have benefited by the inspiration of my mother, who urged excellence in schoolwork and household tasks. She encouraged her children to excel: “No one can ever take education and achievements away from you.” This early influence directed many of my decisions, even during childhood, and I learned to eliminate activities that were not goal-oriented. Self-discipline and productivity were expected, and they followed naturally.

The inspiration of my teachers and professors encouraged me to pursue a medical career. This was especially

important when peers suggested less demanding alternatives. The inspiration of my spouse has always supported my efforts to teach locally and nationally, learn new skills, write, and participate in administrative and committee work. His response to my professional invitations is always the same: “You accepted, didn't you?”

Being a skilled observer of other people, procedures, events, and conversation offers a distinct advantage. There also is value in seeking new information. I gather the facts and incorporate with dedicated discipline anything of importance that will improve my personal life or professional activities. The new ideas may relate to improved lecture presentations, procedure techniques, writing skills or proficiency, or committee work. I evaluate committee commitments and identify the needs of the group. I then volunteer according to my talents or interest in learning new information. I make it customary never to turn down an opportunity to serve, meet new people, or experience new things, even when it is inconvenient to previous plans or my personal life.

There is a positive aspect to every event, so I do not waste time on regrets—that is only negative reinforcement. I practice reliving the vibrant and exciting times, and I smile for myself.

Personal improvement also is enhanced through changing behavior relating to health, exercise, and nutrition. Discipline and mental strength are helpful traits. Flexibility is necessary to meet new challenges, and it may require conscious compromise in the area of mundane household tasks. I make my time and efforts meaningful based on what activity will have importance five or ten years in the future.

The mind must be in touch with the body daily. If there is a deficiency in sleep, fresh air, movement, or diet, then I make adjustments to my schedule as soon as possible. It is important to pace myself and avoid stress. I use relaxation techniques that can be practiced anywhere: office, car, plane, amphitheater. Many times events must be rescheduled or cancelled in order to observe mind and body alignment. My body needs daily aerobic exercise, and I frequently use vacation time for physical activity.

I am a pilot, and I love to practice loops, rolls, and spins on the weekend in my Bellanca Super Decathlon aerobatic airplane.

Close monitoring of my activities by my spouse and me prevents overload. Our regular sharing of activities and discussions helps to identify priorities. The advantage of two viewpoints on one topic provides an additional valuable perspective. My understanding helpmate participates in managing the children and household—the secret to my happiness and success.

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The Juggled Life

EDITOR'S NOTE: Leona M. Bayer, MD, practiced medicine in the San Francisco area for 50 years. She was also on the clinical staff of Stanford University School of Medicine. On the occasion of her 85th birthday, she was honored by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and on two previous occasions by the Physicians for Social Responsibility.

DICTIONARIES DEFINE JUGGLING IN MANY WAYS, most of them implying trickery or deceit. Perhaps those of us who try to